

Ten Great Tips for Preventing Shin Splints

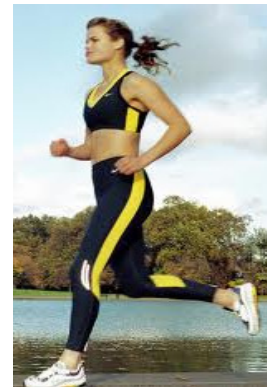


‘Shin Splints’ is a term given to the pain people experience in the lower leg when walking or running. The most common area of pain is often on the medial border of the tibia bone, which is on the inside of your lower leg. If you experience symptoms in this area it is important to seek advice and treatment through a physiotherapist. If left to worsen, shin splints can lead to stress fractures of the tibia.

Shin splints can be prevented by following the ten great tips below:

1. Ensure you are wearing the appropriate shoes for your foot type and biomechanics. Seek assessment of your gait pattern and the prescription of the correct shoe to help minimise excess pronation or rolling in of your feet.
2. Regularly stretch your calves and muscles throughout your lower limbs, especially after exercise. To ensure the joints within your lower limbs have the freedom to move throughout their full range of motion. This is very important to ensure proper biomechanics of the lower limbs whilst walking and running.
3. Ensure your ‘core’ or muscles around your pelvis and trunk are strong and well balanced. We need to have a strong and stable base for our lower limbs to work from so ensuring our abdominal muscles and stabilisers of the hips are working properly is very important.
4. Mix up the surfaces you exercise on. Try exercising on the beach, at the park or on a track not just on the concrete.

5. Cross train – try riding a bike or swimming as well as walking and running. These alternative exercises reduce the impact through your joints and muscles as they are non-weight bearing. They also help to target other areas of the body which will help your overall strength and fitness.



6. Ensure your diet and nutrition includes plenty of protein and carbohydrates, helping to ensure your bone strength is optimal.
7. Change your shoes regularly, keep a shoe log to help you assess the time for buying a new pair of shoes. It is recommended that you change your shoes every 500-800km so that the support that your shoes offer you is not completely diminished. If you are a heavy set or tall person the amount of mileage you get out of your shoes may be less than this so remember to take this into account.
8. Keep your ankles and feet strong. Our muscles in our feet and around our ankles often get forgotten yet these are very important for appropriate gait patterns.
9. When you are starting a new exercise regime, ensure that you begin gradually and slowly increase the load and frequency overtime. Your muscles need time to strengthen and get used to being loaded more often and at a higher load.
10. If your symptoms linger and do not resolve with rest, stretching and perhaps a new pair of shoes, seek treatment immediately through a physiotherapist.